

Figure 19  
Water Resources and Management

Source: NM Office of the State Engineer;  
US Geological Survey; Middle Rio Grande  
Conservancy District; MR COG.



Valencia County residents rely on good quality ground water (underground water) as their primary source of drinking water. This source of water is found in aquifers which are water bearing layers of permeable rock, sand, or gravel beneath the surface of the land. Ground water becomes contaminated when contaminants move through soil and aquifers faster than natural processes can reduce them to acceptable levels (McQuillan, Parker, and Richards, 2000). The sources of ground water contamination are many, with the chief contributors being septic tanks, dairy and other animal wastes, commercial fertilizers, leaking underground storage tanks, and spills and leaks from above ground storage tanks, pipelines, and traffic accidents. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has identified 65 past and current leaks from storage tanks in Valencia County that are either cleaned up or are currently being monitored or investigated. Storage tank leaks have been identified in Belen, Bosque Farms, Los Lunas, Jarales, and Peralta.

Septic tanks are especially problematic because in New Mexico they have contaminated more acre-feet of ground water and more public and private water supply wells than all other sources combined. An estimated 208,000 septic-tank systems and cesspools discharge about 78 million gallons of wastewater per day in New Mexico. Lot size is a critical factor in determining the amount of natural attenuation that occurs between the location where septic effluents are discharged, and the nearest down-gradient point of ground water withdrawal, and thus the potential for water well contamination. In New Mexico, residential developments with average lot sizes up to 0.84 acre (including roadways) have caused ground water contamination in excess of allowable standards (McQuillan, 2004).

The New Mexico Environment Department has recently tightened up regulations controlling septic tanks and other household sewage treatment and disposal systems. The new rules, approved April 6, 2005, apply a three-quarter acre minimum on undeveloped lots whose depth to ground water is less than 100 feet regardless of the plat date, and bring all undeveloped lots to current standards (Valencia County News Bulletin, 2005). Before the new standards were approved, regulations allowed septic tank installation on lots smaller than three-quarters of an acre if the lot was platted before February 1, 1990.

A map (Figure 20) showing Areas of Concern (AOCs) where waters of the State may be vulnerable to contamination from septic tank discharges has been compiled by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). This map shows areas in Valencia County with ground water less than 100 feet deep, and with 2000 mg/L or less Total Dissolved Solids (TDS). The County currently has no measures in the zoning or subdivision regulations that protect wellheads or recharge areas. The County should investigate adopting some regulations to protect the ground water.



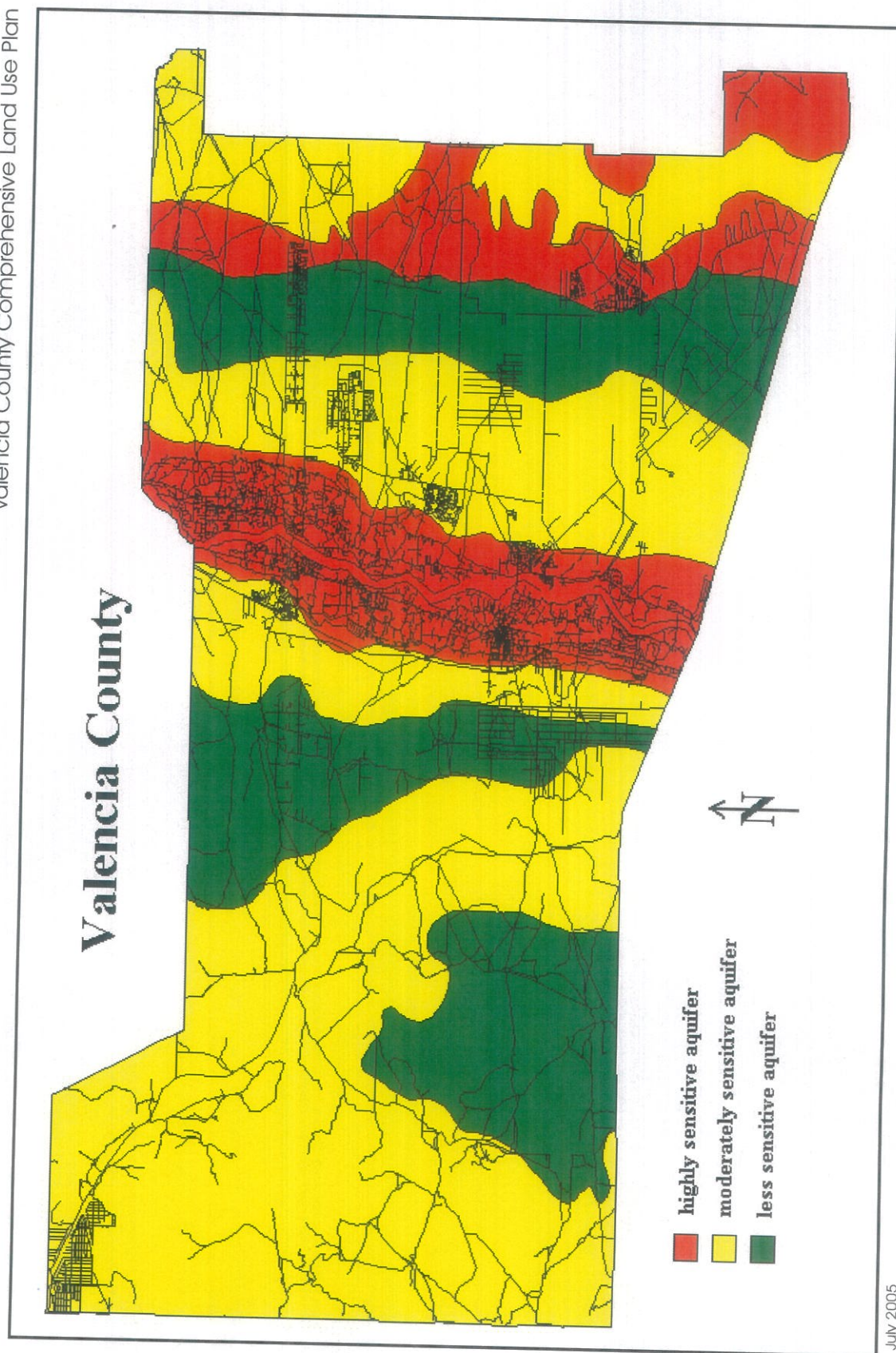


Figure 20  
 Liquid Waste Program  
 Aquifer Mapping - Areas of Concern

Source: NM Environment Department, Lee Wilson and Assoc., Aquifer Vulnerability Maps



Recently, a group of public and private water providers has been meeting with the County to develop a collaborative approach to regional drinking water systems. This Valencia County Drinking Water Planning Group has proposed an agreement for all parties to work cooperatively in creating a community solution to meet the current and future drinking water needs of the County. The group is concentrating on water quality and water conservation issues that are held in common among the water providers in the County.



Conservancy Ditch in Valencia County

**Air Quality** The air quality in Valencia County is currently in compliance with the Clean Air Act and other Federal and State air quality regulations. Nonetheless, as population, industry, and the number of vehicles on the road continue to increase, air quality becomes more of a concern because of the potential respiratory and health problems that can result from polluted air. Ozone was monitored in Valencia County (Bosque Farms) from 1988 to 2003. However, because there was never a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, monitoring was discontinued in 2003. None of the other regulated pollutants (nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and lead) were monitored by the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau because they were not deemed problematic in Valencia County. There have been violations of air quality standards in Bernalillo County; however, and Valencia County may be or become part of that regional "air shed" in terms of areawide air movement patterns.

### **Public Health and Safety**

Valencia County currently has several community service programs and senior citizen centers. But, the residents of the unincorporated County currently have no general hospital or 24 hour urgent care center. To receive these services, Valencia County residents travel to Albuquerque or elsewhere. Given the population growth in the County, there is an obvious need for improved medical facilities.

**Medical Facilities** The major health facility in the County is Presbyterian Family Healthcare in Belen. Services offered there include urgent care, primary care, diagnostics (lab and radiology), mammography, and various specialty clinics (podiatry, cardiology, and OB/GYN). Urgent care hours are 8 am – 7 pm



Monday through Friday, and 8 am – 5 pm Saturday and Sunday. At one time there was a hospital in Belen, but it closed down more than a decade ago. Los Lunas is anticipating a healthcare center or hospital by autumn of 2006. The proposed 11,500 square-foot building would be located in a developing area near the Home Depot off Main Street near I-25. Planned services include several family practice physicians, a certified nurse midwife, behavioral health services, an on-site laboratory, and a radiology center.

**Health and Social Services** Valencia County Health and Social Services include the Older Americans Program, Valencia County Indigent, and five senior citizen centers. The Older Americans Program prepares meals for senior centers and for the homebound elderly, as well as housekeeping services and transportation for those in need. Valencia County Indigent provides financial assistance to Valencia County residents for hospital and ambulance bills that are medically indigent and do not have medical insurance. Valencia County has five Senior Citizen Centers: Del Rio Senior Center, Meadow Lake Senior Center, Belen Senior Center,

Fred Luna Senior Center, and Bosque Farms Meal Site. A private nursing home, Laurel Meadows Healthcare, is located in Belen. Laurel Meadows has 120 certified beds and 119 residents.



Laurel Meadows Healthcare in Belen



## PART III

### TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

An important element of any comprehensive land use plan is to provide information and analysis that helps one to visualize future or anticipated development patterns based on trend analysis, statistical projections, as well as rational assumptions about possible future conditions. To a great extent, the patterns of future development are simply an extension of the current distribution of development. One of the purposes of the comprehensive plan is to steer development into forms that will provide the greatest benefit to the County and its residents. This section of the Plan provides baseline information to prepare for the future needs and demands of growing population and employment.

#### Demographic Projections

**Population Forecast** The Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of New Mexico is responsible for creating population forecasts for each county in New Mexico. BBER forecasts provide a statistical base for MRCOG forecasts in order to maintain consistency for planning activities. BBER is projecting Valencia County to continue growing steadily, reaching a population total of 118,593 in 2025. However, while the County grew by nearly 50% over each decade since 1970, BBER is projecting a slowed rate of growth as illustrated by the annual growth rates presented in Table 20. Anticipated population increase, however, is nearly constant at 20 to 22 thousand new residents per decade.

**Table 20**  
**Historical and Forecast Population Growth**  
**in Valencia County 1950 to 2025**

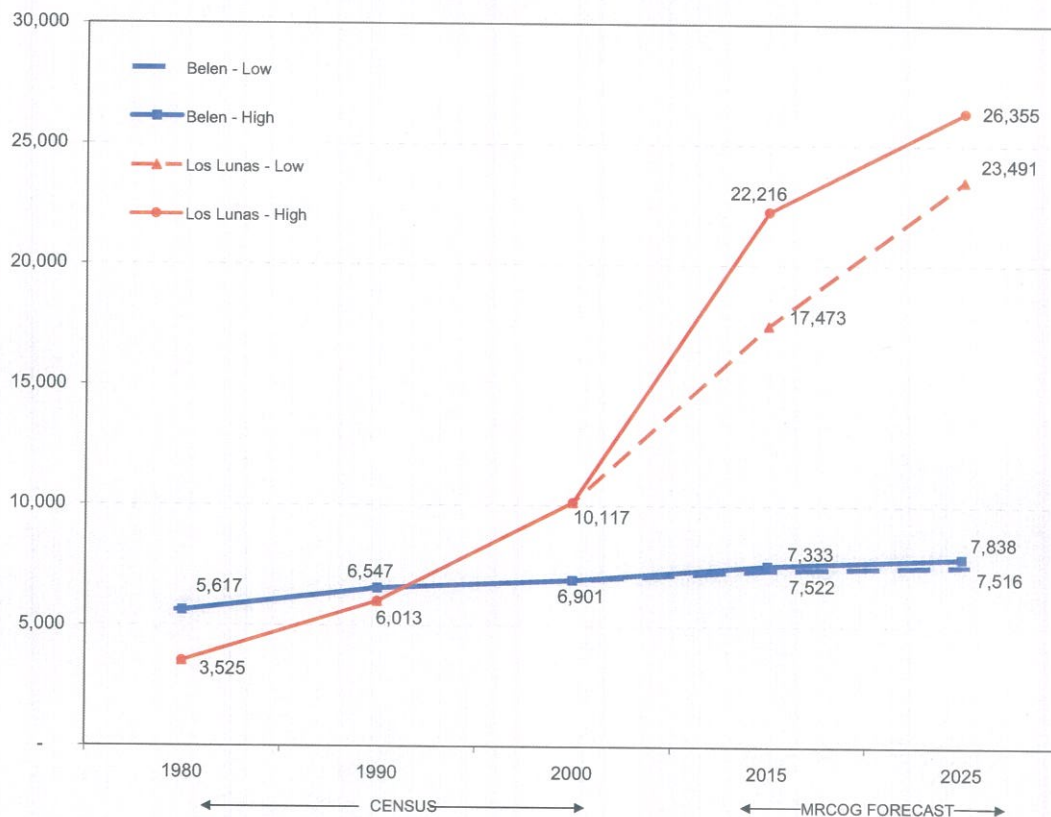
Year	Population	Absolute Change	Average Annual Growth Rate
Census Year			
1950	13,530	---	---
1960	16,146	2,616	1.78
1970	20,451	4,305	2.39
1980	30,769	10,318	4.17
1990	45,235	14,466	3.93
2000	66,152	20,917	3.87
Forecast Year			
2005	76,512	10,360	2.95
2010	86,708	10,196	2.53
2015	97,330	10,622	2.34
2020	108,064	10,734	2.11
2025	118,593	10,529	1.88

Source: US Census Bureau, Bureau of Business and Economic Research (UNM)



MRCOG provides smaller area projections upon request and over the past couple years has completed forecasts for Los Lunas and Belen out to year 2025. Both projections carry a high and low series. In the case of Belen, the two series do not differ greatly, as it is projected to grow only slightly over future decades. This is based primarily on slow growth exhibited in the past. The Census data shows Belen with a population increase of less than 400 residents between 1990 and 2000. In 1960 Belen represented over 30% of the County's population, while in 2000 it occupied only 10% of the population. Los Lunas, however, is projected to experience fairly significant growth over the next 20 years. Again, this is primarily based on past growth trends, but also includes plans that exist for new development including the lands of Huning Ranch, which is expected to build 6000 homes by 2025. The Valencia County forecast is shown along with Belen and Los Lunas forecast series in Figure 21. It is important to keep in mind that these projections do not take into account possible future annexations (such as the proposed Sun Ranch development or others).

**Figure 21**  
**Historical and Forecast Population for Valencia County,**  
**Los Lunas, and Belen**



Source: US Census Bureau, MRCOG, Bureau of Business and Economic Research. Belen was forecast by MRCOG November 2002, Los Lunas was forecast September 2004, and Valencia County was forecast by BBER in April of 2004. All forecasts are based on today's boundaries and do not account for future annexations.



**Projected Housing and Households** The population in households was projected by the forecast population and Census data which includes persons who do not live in households, such as residents of nursing homes, prisons, other institutions, and persons in non-institutional settings such as dormitories, group homes, or shelters. The projected number of households was calculated by dividing the population in households by the forecast average household size. Household size was based on Census Bureau projections of household size. MRCOG assumed that the change in household size in Valencia County is related to the anticipated change in the national average household size. Therefore, the projection follows that assumption. Table 21 displays the historical and forecast population in households, average household size, and number of households. The number of households is equal to the number of occupied housing units.

**Table 21**  
**Household Forecast 2005 – 2025**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population in Households</b>	<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>Households</b>
2000	64,781	2.86	22,681
2005	75,029	2.83	26,528
2010	85,005	2.78	30,598
2015	95,380	2.75	34,743
2020	105,183	2.71	39,021
2025	116,183	2.68	43,322

*Source: US Census Bureau, MRCOG*

The average household size in Valencia County is projected to steadily decrease over the forecast period, which is consistent with national trends. Such trends are characterized in terms of more single person households, couples choosing to have fewer children, and an increasing number of couples with grown children (i.e., “empty nesters”). Given the expected decline in household size, the number of households or occupied housing units will consequently increase faster than the population. The number of households is anticipated to almost double over the forecast period to top 43,000 in 2025.

With an increase in over 20,000 households, there will be an obvious demand for more housing units in the county. Housing units were forecast from occupied housing units by estimating the percentage of occupied housing. MRCOG used the historical average for occupancy rates to project future occupancy. Housing units were forecast as single family and multifamily units. Mobile homes and manufactured homes were included as single family units. Multifamily units were projected from an analysis of historical data and recent building permit data. Table 22 displays the forecast housing units by type and reports the percentage that are occupied.



**Table 22**  
**Housing Units Forecast 2005 - 2025**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>Single Family Units</b>	<b>Multi Family Units</b>	<b>Percent Multi Family Units</b>
2000	24,643	23,519	1,124	4.6
2005	29,157	28,080	1,077	3.7
2010	33,608	31,969	1,639	4.9
2015	38,138	36,254	1,884	4.9
2020	42,815	40,638	2,177	5.1
2025	47,515	44,999	2,516	5.3

Source: US Census Bureau, MRCOG

The number of housing units is projected to grow by 93% between 2000 and 2025, and about 91% of the housing units in 2025 are projected to be occupied. Multi-family units are expected to increase slightly as a proportional share of the total housing stock.

**Future Employment** Valencia County employment (number of jobs located within the County) is forecast based on several factors which include anticipated population growth, past employment trends, and what is known at the time of the forecast regarding major development plans in the County. The base employment numbers for the year 2000 are derived from the New Mexico Department of Labor (DOL) and are adjusted to include self-employment, military, railroad, and other areas not covered by the DOL numbers. The forecast shown in Table 23 by employment sector was primarily derived from the REMI Computer Model, which is an economic forecasting model. Other data used with the model were BBER's short range employment forecasts.

**Table 23**  
**Forecast Employment by Sector 2005 - 2025**

<b>Employment Sector</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
Agriculture	309	284	278	282	282	282
Construction & Mining	954	1,039	1,070	1,076	1,102	1,135
Manufacturing	1,434	1,721	1,907	1,991	2,037	2,027
Utilities	1,107	1,232	1,383	1,556	1,766	1,986
Wholesale	264	236	223	205	175	134
Retail	3,482	3,799	4,328	4,856	5,471	6,109
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	474	557	655	716	761	798
Services	2,220	2,513	2,943	3,344	3,731	4,166
Government	4,585	4,957	5,384	5,730	6,001	6,258
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>14,829</b>	<b>16,338</b>	<b>18,171</b>	<b>19,756</b>	<b>21,326</b>	<b>22,895</b>

Source: NM Department of Labor, MRCOG

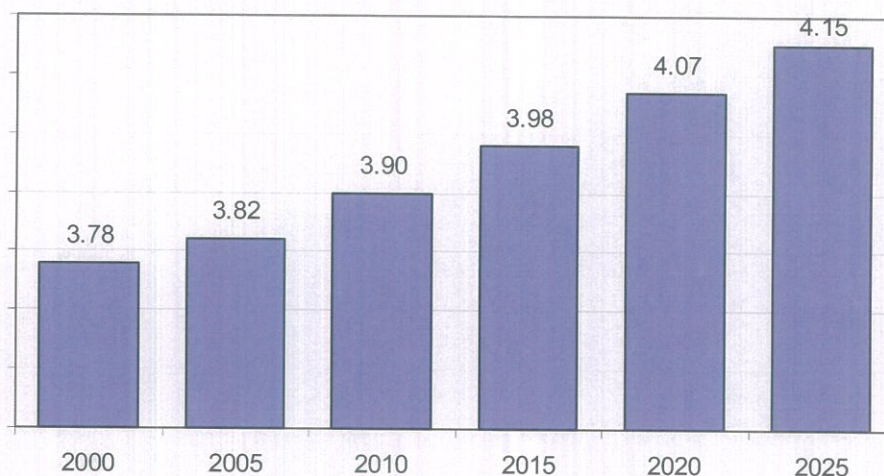
Based on the model output, it is projected that Valencia County will add about 8,000 jobs by 2025. This is based on assumptions that are heavily



influenced by current and historical trends, but which can be significantly effected by a large employer moving into the County. Sectors that are projected to decline are agriculture and wholesale trade, while retail trade, services and government jobs are expected to increase significantly.

The overall pace of employment growth for Valencia County is also projected to occur at a similar rate as the population growth, that is, 54% between year 2000 and 2025. And similar to population, it is projected that the County will continue to have an increasing presence in the greater region in terms of jobs. This is illustrated in Figure 22. The MRCOG region for statistical purposes consists of Valencia, Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Torrance Counties, and a small portion of southern Santa Fe County.

**Figure 22**  
**Valencia County's Projected Share of Employment in the Region**



Source: New Mexico Department of Labor, MRCOG

The region is defined by the counties that fall within MRCOG's planning area, which are Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, Valencia, and Southern Santa Fe County.

Although Valencia County is increasing its share of employment in the region, it remains that there many more workers than jobs in the County. The 2000 Census data related to commuting patterns revealed that approximately 14,400 Valencia County residents left the County for work daily, the majority being those who headed for jobs in Bernalillo County. That is more than half of the working population in the County. This is also reflected in average commute times, which at about 30 minutes, ranks Valencia County as having the 3<sup>rd</sup> longest commutes in the State. Of course part of this fact can be attributed to growing traffic congestion as well as long travel distances. Compared to 1990 commuting statistics, a higher percent of Valencia County's residents in 2000 are staying within the County for work. This trend is expected to continue as local job opportunities increase. Currently, over 80% of the jobs located in Valencia County are held by its residents; and there is no indication that the percentage



will change in the future. Therefore it is assumed that an increase in the number of job positions in the County will mainly benefit the resident labor force.

### **Future Development Patterns and Activity Centers**

As previously noted in Figure 4 of this Plan, there are currently 18 County Communities that have been identified within the County for planning purposes. One of the basic characteristics of these County Communities is the clustering pattern of residential development evolving from historical settlements and master planned subdivisions. In some of these County Communities, the increasing development intensity in the future will eventually result in necessary centralized utilities and more complex infrastructure. In contrast, other County Communities, particularly the traditional historic communities, will subscribe to a development strategy of preservation and protection of the neighborhood, which will be controlling factor in future improvements.

In order to accommodate the anticipated growth in population and employment in the County, more concentrated forms of development are expected to evolve; and it would benefit the County to encourage such development to grow in locations that are readily accessible, and where the negative impacts on surrounding lands would be minimized. By using the regulatory powers of zoning and subdivision regulations, the County can steer land use and development toward appropriate areas where more intensive activities can occur. In particular, commercial and industrial job centers of the County should be strongly supported and encouraged by the County.

This Comprehensive Plan focuses on the concept of "activity centers." The purpose of this concept is to counter uncontrolled sprawling development by inducing more manageable and concentrated forms of development to help reduce long-term costs of public services and facilities. County Activity Centers are distinctive areas which would be allowed to attract intensive development with the County's support and assistance. The characteristics of a County Activity Center include a high potential for relatively greater densities of buildings and structures, centralized utility systems, higher capacity infrastructure, mixed use or special use development, and pedestrian-oriented design for internal circulation.

Potential County Activity Centers are presented in Figure 23 of this Plan. These Activity Centers meet the intent and purposes established in this Plan and have been endorsed through the public review process. Some of the noted characteristics of an Activity Center are already present in each location. There are five County Activity Centers currently identified for planning purposes:

- a) The Belen Airport is the only public aviation facility in the County and there is both public and private support for aviation-related and other industrial activities to be developed on the surrounding lands;
- b) Sun Ranch Industrial area (located near the North Belen I-25



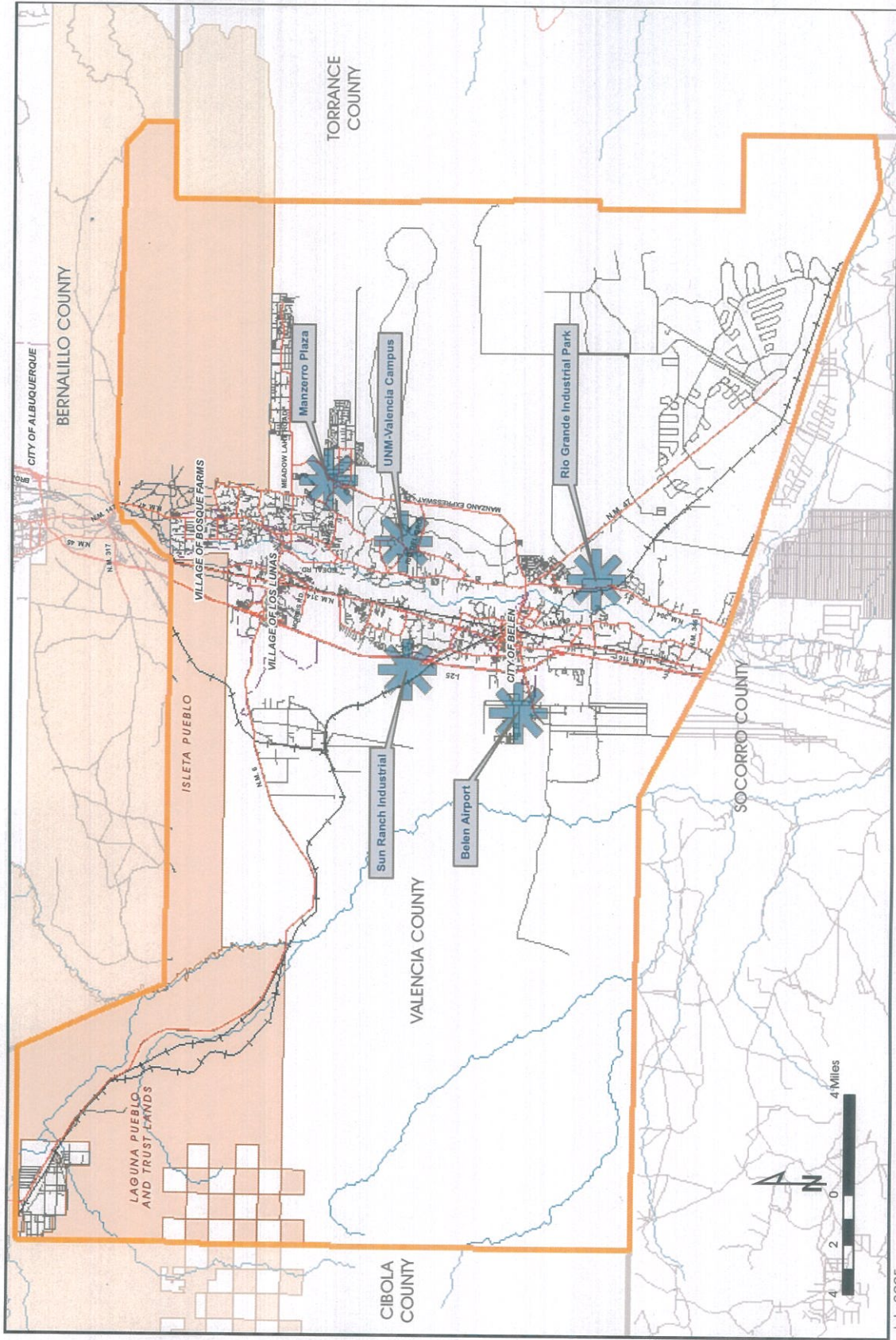
- Interchange with adjacent rail line) is currently undeveloped but is the general site location of various industrial, mixed-use, and special use proposals with support from the City of Belen;
- c) The Rio Grande Industrial Park is a long-established industrial area with significant potential for new development as a large-scale industrial cluster containing rail access;
  - d) The Valencia Campus of the University of New Mexico is the major post-secondary educational institution in the County, has a master plan for expansion, and is surrounded by relatively undeveloped land with a potential for mixed-use and university-serving development; and
  - e) The Manzerro Plaza which is a rapidly developing center for planned commercial and medium-to-high density residential development located along the Manzano Expressway.

While other County Activity Centers may develop, current and subsequent efforts to encourage new development into such areas can proceed with minimal change to the County's land use management capabilities. Also, these potential Activity Centers are in a position to receive improved infrastructure and expanded accessibility in the near future.

Future development on the unincorporated lands of the County outside the impacted areas of the County Activity Centers is anticipated to be comprised of two basic forms of development: 1) medium-to-large scale subdivisions and re-subdivisions; and 2) a rural type of infill development on preexisting lots of record or approved lot splits. As a result, the pattern of development that exists in the County today will likely continue, even though there may not be adequate roads and utilities available. Although not expected to be a significant component of overall growth, there will be an ongoing trend of individual lot development in scattered locations in the County because there are thousands of undeveloped lots that were platted before the County administered a subdivision review process. These "antiquated subdivisions" often lack sufficient road access or utilities, and many are self-sufficient with a domestic water well and an on-site wastewater treatment system.

The most significant development concern for the County in the future will be a continuation of the current problem of land divisions in the agricultural areas of the Rio Grande valley. These lands are historically suited for agricultural croplands and, because of their rural character, there is an unrelenting demand for housing development in those areas. If the County desires to diminish or reverse the trend of declining irrigated agricultural areas, there needs to be a concerted effort to develop regulatory or incentive programs aimed at the preservation or protection of the irrigated lands of the valley.





July 2005

Figure 23  
Potential County Activity Centers



## **PART IV**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Goals are broad, visionary statements describing the direction that a community wants to go; while objectives are related statements that describe how goals can be achieved. Typically, there are numerous objectives for each goal. The combination of goals and objectives provide a structure and a basis for the policy direction and action plan recommendations necessary to implement the Plan. While not mandatory, goals and objectives should be used to justify current and future programs, projects, and local regulations.

#### **Public Participation Process**

The public played an important role in preparing the goals and objectives of the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan. Local residents were given various opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about the future direction of the County. Coverage by the local news media was exceptionally good with coverage during all stages of the planning process.

Shortly after Valencia County was awarded the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a Steering Committee was created. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was comprised of a local group of individuals who embody the wide-ranging interests and sectors of the community. The Board of County Commissioners named the Valencia County Planning and Zoning Commission as the core group of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee which was further supplemented by additional members from each of the Commission districts. The Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee provided an oversight of the development of the Plan; and ensured ample and diverse knowledge and opinions about the character of the County and the responsibilities of the local government.

The Steering Committee assisted in crafting the Goals and Objectives and Recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan. In developing these Goals and Objectives, the Committee members worked on reviewing, revising, and reconstructing a previous set of goals, objectives, and policy statements recommended in the 2002 Draft Comprehensive Plan (that was never adopted). Consequently, a total of 97 goals and objectives were drafted essentially as an update of the original 206 goals, objectives, and policies in the 2002 Draft Plan. The overall intent and essential concepts expressed in the 2002 Draft statements were preserved, updated, and supplemented where justified by current circumstances.

Advertised public meetings and workshops offered Valencia County citizens the opportunity to review and comment on the key elements of the



Comprehensive Plan. Four public workshops were held to review and comment on draft components of the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan. The first two public workshops presented and discussed the draft goals and objectives. One of the workshops was held at the Daniel Fernandez Intermediate School in Los Lunas on December 7, 2004, while the second was held in the Belen City Council Chambers on December 9, 2004. Both of the workshops were publicized in the local newspaper, *Valencia County News-Bulletin*, on several occasions; and the local radio station conducted an interview with the County Planner regarding the Goals and Objectives Statements. Also, prior to the workshops, the proposed Goals and Objectives were placed on the Valencia County Website.

Two public hearings were conducted by the Valencia County Board of County Commissioners to solicit final input on the proposed Goals and Objectives. The hearings, conducted on January 12 and January 21, 2004, culminated with the adoption of a resolution approving the Goals and Objectives (see Appendix B).

The third and fourth public workshops presented draft Recommendations for Action and gathered suggestions and ideas that improved and enhanced the recommendations. The third public workshop was held at the Daniel Fernandez Intermediate School in Los Lunas on May 17, 2005, while the fourth workshop was held in the Belen City Council Chambers on May 18, 2005. After these public workshops, there were two more public meetings conducted by the Valencia County Board of County Commissioners to collect final contributions on the proposed Recommendations. A resolution adopting the Recommendations for Action for the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Valencia County Board of Commissioners on June 17, 2005 (see Appendix C).

### **Overview of Goals and Objectives**

The development of goals and objectives is, in part, a product of the public comments received at civic workshops and the intensive support and input of the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The goals and objectives are created as positive statements with potential actions that are intended to address the concerns and desires of the public; and also to respond to basic community needs. While not legally binding, or an official mandate, these goals and objectives imply action that may be initiated by the County, and should be referenced to justify and guide future County policies, programs, and projects.

### **Adopted Goals and Objectives**

There are a total of 22 goals and 81 objectives listed below. All of the Goals, with their subsidiary objectives, have been clustered into seven general categories: land use and housing development, transportation and circulation, regional infrastructure, water and other natural resources, economic



development, historical and cultural resources, and county government operations. Many of these goals and objectives can be traced back to the community issues discussed in the public involvement process. In other cases, they are specifically designed to improve the public health, safety, and welfare of County residents based on research conducted in developing the Plan or are based on findings from the inventory of the County's facilities and services. There is no priority order intended in these goals and objectives.

### **Land Use and Housing Development**

**Goal A: Guide development in a manner that balances the patterns of urban development with the rural character and natural resources of the County.**

Objective A-1: Control the types, densities (ranging from high to low density), and distribution of development through regulatory ordinances and other forms of land use management.

Objective A-2: Implement zoning policies that achieve a desirable mix of land uses and densities, preserve existing neighborhood character, and protect designated "sensitive areas" in the County.

Objective A-3: Investigate and test the feasibility of new techniques for land use management in the County.

Objective A-4: Maintain a land use planning process that is integrated with other major planning elements concerning transportation, water resources, environmental quality, historical and cultural preservation, and economic development.

**Goal B: Protect and enhance the distinctive identities of the unincorporated communities and subregions within the County.**

Objective B-1: Designate "County Communities" as special planning areas with distinctive levels of development and unique local characteristics.

Objective B-2: Protect the integrity of traditional historic communities as well as established, master planned developments.

Objective B-3: Identify sensitive areas in the County and regulate development to achieve environmental, cultural, or natural resource protection.



Objective B-4      Preserve the rural character of the Rio Grande valley by regulating land use to protect agricultural lands, maintain low density development, and promote open space.

**Goal C:      Identify locations and siting criteria for “County Activity Centers” to accommodate intensive commercial and industrial activity clusters and other special use developments.**

Objective C-1:      Designate areas for industrial, commercial, recreational, and multi-use clusters where adequate roads, utilities, and public services are currently located or can easily be made available.

Objective C-2:      Impose “performance criteria” to mitigate the off-site impacts of industrial and other intensive land use activities.

Objective C-3:      Provide incentives for planning and developing County Activity Centers in designated areas.

**Goal D:      Preserve and protect lands for agricultural purposes in the County.**

Objective D-1:      Develop and maintain an inventory of prime and unique farmlands in the County.

Objective D-2:      Adopt regulatory ordinances to protect agricultural operations and preserve lands for farming, ranching, and agriculture-related activities.

Objective D-3:      Impose regulatory mechanisms to buffer agricultural lands from urbanization.

**Goal E:      Establish a master plan for County parks, recreation, and open space.**

Objective E-1:      Inventory all public and private recreational lands and facilities available to County residents.

Objective E-2:      Define the “open space” concept and related criteria for designating open space in the County.

Objective E-3:      Investigate methods for securing and maintaining lands for recreation and preserving open space.

Objective E-4:      Support the establishment of a County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Committee.



**Goal F: Encourage a range of housing opportunities for the residents of the County.**

- Objective F-1: Establish mechanisms and provide incentives to ensure the availability of affordable housing in the County.
- Objective F-2: Establish and support a proactive County Housing Authority.
- Objective F-3: Promote master-planned development of housing in the County with adequate infrastructure, flexibility of design, mixed use, and clustering of structures.

**Transportation and Circulation**

**Goal G: Accommodate the efficient movement of people and goods through the County by maintaining a road network of sufficient capacity to meet local and regional circulation needs.**

- Objective G-1: Adopt and periodically update a long-range road system plan for the County with road and highway classifications and criteria for the design and right-of-way of future roads.
- Objective G-2: Establish and implement a short-range road improvement and maintenance plan which is integrated and coordinated with relevant government agencies.
- Objective G-3: Continue to study the long term needs of cross-county and through traffic movement to improve north-south circulation (i.e., east of the Rio Grande), and east-west circulation (i.e., crossing the river).
- Objective G-4: Require approval of developments that are major traffic generators to be contingent on traffic impact analysis and off-site improvements.

**Goal H: Preserve the integrity and quality of life in residential neighborhoods and County Communities through proper transportation planning.**

- Objective H-1: Impose design criteria for transportation facilities that promote efficient traffic operations and address future expansions.
- Objective H-2: Link transportation and land use planning through development review procedures and policy directives.



- Objective H-3: Protect residential areas from heavy commercial vehicles and other negative traffic impacts by utilizing special design standards and vehicle restrictions.
- Objective H-4: Use innovative road design and traffic calming techniques to minimize neighborhood disruption caused by traffic flow.
- Goal I: Establish a fully integrated, multimodal, and intermodal transportation system for the County.**
- Objective I-1: Adopt a master plan for pathways (i.e., trails and bikeways) for the County and develop a strategy for land acquisition, dedications, and innovative funding for a comprehensive pathway network.
- Objective I-2: Support the establishment of a Regional Transit District with the authority to provide public transit services to all of the communities in the County.
- Objective I-3: Support improved aviation and rail services available to County residents, thus providing greater options for transportation and economic development.
- Objective I-4: Designate locations for existing and future intermodal transportation hubs to accommodate the connections between local and regional transportation systems.

### **Regional Infrastructure**

- Goal J: Steer urbanizing development to areas where adequate infrastructure, utilities, and public services are available.**
- Objective J-1: Maintain a county-wide inventory of the physical infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems, paved roads, drainage facilities, power distribution, telecommunications, and other regional facilities.
- Objective J-2: Provide development incentives for new development to incorporate centralized utilities and services, or to locate near established infrastructure.
- Objective J-3: Establish water and sewer districts in the urbanizing areas of the County to enable the development and operation of centralized water and wastewater systems.



**Goal K: Promote regional facilities and services that meet health and safety needs of the public.**

- Objective K-1: Ensure that the County has adequate fire fighting and emergency rescue facilities, equipment, and staffing.
- Objective K-2: Plan for sufficient infrastructure and services for future fire fighting, law enforcement and emergency rescue; and encourage joint use of facilities.
- Objective K-3: Develop and implement a regional solid waste management plan for the County, and determine the feasibility of processing and disposal of waste materials within the County.
- Objective K-4: Assist in the development of a full range of medical support infrastructure in Valencia County, such as health clinics, 24-hour emergency services facilities, and a local hospital.

**Water and Other Natural Resources**

**Goal L: Encourage the preservation of the water resources of the County for future generations.**

- Objective L-1: Protect to the extent possible all surface waters for agricultural production, recreational activities, ecosystem management, and aquifer recharge.
- Objective L-2: Promote water conservation and drought preparedness programs throughout the County.
- Objective L-3: Support restoration of the Rio Grande Bosque to be maintained as a healthy riparian ecosystem with emphasis on reducing evapotranspiration losses, fire risk reduction, habitat protection, and eradication of noxious weeds.
- Objective L-4: Establish and maintain a water budget for the County that seeks to balance the relationship between the water inflow, local consumptive use or depletion, and the water outflow.
- Objective L-5: Utilize the Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan as a basis for implementing coordinated water management programs in the County.



**Goal M:      Protect and improve the quality of water resources available to the County.**

- Objective M-1:      Develop and implement a groundwater protection plan and program for the County which includes well monitoring systems, identification of vulnerable areas, septic tank requirements, and wellhead protection.
- Objective M-2:      Identify sources and constituents of “non-point source” pollution in the County, and in coordination with State and Federal agencies, develop a plan and program to mitigate the contamination of water resources.
- Objective M-3:      Identify and protect designated wetlands in the County; and evaluate the feasibility of constructed wetlands and vegetation filters for purposes of water treatment.

**Goal N:      Protect and improve air quality in the County.**

- Objective N-1:      Identify types, sources, and extent of air quality pollution in the County.
- Objective N-2:      Develop and implement an air quality protection plan for the County in cooperation with the Air Quality Control Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department.

**Goal O:      Promote and support watershed management by multiple agencies throughout the County and the Rio Grande Basin.**

- Objective O-1:      Protect the County from damaging effects of storm water runoff through the design and construction of storm water control structures and the implementation of a storm water pollution control plan.
- Objective O-2:      Identify critical areas for groundwater recharge in the County and regulate development in those areas to protect groundwater resources.
- Objective O-3:      Prepare and implement special requirements for urbanizing development and erosion control in steep slope areas.
- Objective O-4:      Evaluate the feasibility of creating a Flood Control District in the County.



## **Economic Development**

**Goal P: Strengthen the economic base of the County, expand employment opportunities, and improve local workforce skills and abilities.**

- Objective P-1: Identify key industry clusters and target markets that are suitable for the County.
- Objective P-2: Provide location incentives for the development of business and industry in key areas that will provide long-term tax benefits to the County.
- Objective P-3: Encourage improvement of the workforce through adult education, drop-out prevention, and job training programs.
- Objective P-4: Cooperate with public school districts to continually improve K-12 education.

**Goal Q: Support private sector development and investment that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the County.**

- Objective Q-1: Promote business and industrial development that balances environmental, economic, and social goals for the County.
- Objective Q-2: Maintain communications with economic development organizations in the County.
- Objective Q-3: Promote and support business recruitment activities that would provide long-term benefits to the County.
- Objective Q-4: Support and promote tourism activities in the County.
- Objective Q-5: Provide regulatory relief to local business establishments when not in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Goal R: Promote and support a sustainable agricultural economy.**

- Objective R-1: Support the Right to Farm Act of the State of New Mexico [47-9-1 to 47-9-7 NMSA 1978] and the Farmland Protection Policy Act of the U.S. [7 USC 658] to minimize the irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses.
- Objective R-2: Support the processing and marketing of locally-grown agricultural products in the County.



## **Historical and Cultural Resources**

**Goal S:      Preserve and enhance features, structures, and places that are historically and culturally significant in the County.**

- Objective S-1:      Compile, supplement, and expand the listing of cultural properties and historic places in Valencia County, as identified on the State and Federal Registers or noted through archaeological surveys.
- Objective S-2:      Coordinate with other agencies and organizations such as the Valencia County Historic Preservation Society, the local school districts, the municipalities, unincorporated communities, and the State Historic Preservation Division to educate the public on the benefits of Historic Preservation.
- Objective S-3:      Identify traditional historic neighborhoods in the County through their designation as a "County Community" and use special zoning districts to protect such historical neighborhoods from incompatible development.

**Goal T:      Protect the scenic resources and unique visual elements of the County.**

- Objective T-1:      Enhance scenic and historic travel routes crossing the County (i.e., Camino Real, Old Route 66, and Abo Pass).
- Objective T-2:      Investigate the feasibility of designating scenic easements in the County that can be protected through regulatory techniques.
- Objective T-3:      Investigate the feasibility of County acquisition of critical scenic features for permanent preservation.
- Objective T-4:      Establish a highway beautification program to enhance the visual experience of travelers through the County.

## **County Government Operations**

**Goal U:      Promote intergovernmental cooperation, wherein the County will share the costs and benefits of development with other governments.**

- Objective U-1:      Utilize joint powers agreements with the municipalities in the County to establish mutual programs for development and governmental services, particularly in areas of concurrent jurisdiction.



- Objective U-2: Establish and maintain ongoing dialogue with Isleta Pueblo and Laguna Pueblo regarding common interests and programs.
- Objective U-3: Cooperate with State, Federal, and special agencies with jurisdiction in the County (U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Dept. of Game & Fish, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, N.M. Land Commission, etc.).

**Goal V: Maintain an ongoing, long-range comprehensive planning process for the County.**

- Objective V-1: Adopt a comprehensive master plan for the County and update the plan every five years.
- Objective V-2: Maintain an integrated comprehensive plan that ensures linkages between County land use, transportation, water resources, environmental protection, historical and cultural preservation, and a sustainable economic base.
- Objective V-3: Conduct a public participation program in order to monitor progress and accomplishments in carrying out the recommendations of the County Comprehensive Plan.
- Objective V-4: Ensure adequate funding and staffing for a County planning department to provide technical support in the implementation of the comprehensive master plan for the County.
- Objective V-5: Reference the County Comprehensive Plan in the annual review and update of the County's Capital Improvement Program.
- Objective V-6: Participate in regional planning activities regarding issues of regional significance (i.e., transportations systems, water resource management, air quality, solid waste disposal).



## **PART V**

### **ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The action plan recommendations are derived from the adopted goals and objectives presented in Part IV of this Plan. These recommendations were formulated through a lengthy process involving numerous meetings of the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and were further refined following public workshops and hearings. The MRCOG staff prepared the initial draft statements based on the research and analysis of data and information gathered from many sources and, as previously noted, with direct references to the goals and objectives for the Plan.

These action plan recommendations are a reflection of the adopted goals and objectives, and serve as the foundation for this Valencia County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. These recommendations establish courses of action to be taken, typically identifying the responsible party or parties, the time frame within which that action might occur, and specific details considered necessary to prepare for implementation. Taken together, these goals, objectives, and recommendations portray a community vision for the future of Valencia County, and how that future might be achieved. The recommendations can be affected by costs, scheduling, appropriateness, and ease of implementation. Nevertheless, action plan recommendations are obviously subject to the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners. A resolution adopting the action plan recommendations was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on June 17, 2005 (see Appendix C).

#### **Land Use Planning and Management**

##### **1) Apply zoning and other regulatory techniques to steer land use and development toward appropriate areas of the County.**

This recommendation employs the concept of balanced communities which involves managing urbanization, preserving rural character, and protecting unique natural areas in the County. Land use zoning is the most effective means of controlling the types, densities, and distribution of development in the County. Zoning and subdivision regulations should be continually reviewed by the County Planning and Zoning Commission, and revised to reflect changing circumstances due to future growth and development.

There are other recommendations in this Plan which rely heavily on the County's regulatory powers of land use management. The County can use its zoning authority, for instance, to promote a clustering pattern of development, or more intensive levels of development, where roads and utilities are or will be accessible for new or increased levels of development. Conversely, the County also has the power to require or preserve low density in specific areas. The



appropriate areas for various types of development will likely be established through a sequence of policy decisions made by the Board of County Commissioners. It should be noted, however, that policies and priorities can change over time due to many factors affecting the evolution of development in the County.

**2) Provide incentives to encourage more intensive levels of development in areas where infrastructure is or will be readily available.**

The County may offer incentives to encourage developers to build in locations that are more suitable for small-lot subdivisions and non-rural development. The County should use its regulatory authority to make it easier to develop in areas where roads, power, water and/or wastewater systems, and other public utilities already exist. This is a common sense approach which can significantly lower the costs of development to the County as well as the developers.

The most acceptable and easy-to-implement method of steering or inducing development into certain areas is through what is commonly referred to as regulatory relief. An example of regulatory relief would be where the County purposely lowers or diminishes the restrictions on site development requirements such as maximum height limits, lot coverage, minimum setback or separation of structures, and flexibility of land use activities. The County should encourage creative site design concepts for planned development projects.

Zoning, in itself, is not the only means for managing development by creating patterns of land use and allowing or restricting various levels and types of development. Tax incentives are another strategy to attract development into specified areas. The County should investigate statutory authority for alternative methods of taxation such as tax abatement and tax increment financing within special districts.

**3) Designate locations and prepare special regulations for "County Activity Centers" in order to promote and accommodate clustering and mixed use development.**

The Valencia County Comprehensive Plan strongly encourages the establishment of multiple centers or activity clusters throughout the County where supporting utilities and services can be readily provided. These "County Activity Centers" should be located where concentrations of intensive or specialized forms of development can occur. Although each of the three municipalities in the County meets the broad definition of a County Activity Center, they lie outside the jurisdiction of the County and are therefore not included for purposes of this recommendation. Ideally, County Activity Centers should be situated where they would be free from municipal annexation and incorporation, thus providing a long term benefit to the County as revenue generating development.



Some characteristics of the County Activity Centers include: a diverse mix of land uses, major access capacity and connected street patterns, relatively higher density of buildings and structures, centralized utility systems, and pedestrian-oriented design wherever possible. Multiple residential units should be encouraged in Activity Centers, where practical, to promote more self-sufficient communities. In some cases, special generators such as universities, airports, or shopping malls may form the nucleus of an Activity Center.

This Comprehensive Plan has identified potential County Activity Centers throughout the County, all in various stages of development ranging from vacant land to established building clusters (i.e., University of New Mexico Valencia Campus or the Rio Grande Industrial Park). These proposed County Activity Centers are identified in Figure 22 as generalized locations and meet some of the locational criteria for an Activity Center such as transportation access. The intention is to provide a basis for subsequent zoning and detailed area planning for future development.



UNM Valencia Campus

#### **4) Designate “County Communities” for purposes of local neighborhood planning and preservation of traditional historical communities.**

The County is a composition of many unincorporated communities, in addition to the three municipalities (i.e., municipal corporations) and the Isleta and Laguna Indian Reservations. The size and diversity of these communities reflects the unique character and history of the County. In Valencia County, there are several historic communities (i.e., Tome, Peralta, etc.) with significant buildings and structures that should be preserved and protected for their cultural assets and traditional values. Other communities throughout the County range in origin from modern suburban enclaves to rural agricultural settlements.

By identifying the major unincorporated communities as “County Communities,” the County government can generate a sense of place among residents and create a geographic reference for purposes of County operations and services. The designation of County Communities as distinct subareas of the County could also provide a basis for neighborhood-level planning, district zoning, and capital improvements programming. A graphic display of commonly-known communities within the County is presented in this Plan (see Figure 4)



which establishes the principal areas for designation as "County Communities" or some other similar labeling of county subareas.

**5) Develop a county inventory and map of historic places and cultural elements to provide a basis for historic preservation and education programs in the County.**

This recommendation would not require a major commitment of County resources, since many of the historically significant buildings, structures, and sites are already identified by state and federal agencies. Nevertheless, the County should consolidate such information into a reference map that can be used in reviewing proposals for future development projects. Such a map could also be used as a teaching aid to educate the public about historical points of interest in the County. A simplified map displaying the locations of historic properties on the state and federal registers is provided in this Plan (see Figure 3) and can be used as base information for a more comprehensive map with additional historic and cultural points of interest.

Furthermore, the County can use its regulatory authority to establish historic districts, if desired, to preserve areas where there is an accumulation of historically significant elements. Another purpose for historic districts might be to impose special design requirements for future development in order to replicate or continue the architectural style that defines a historical period for that unique community.



Tomé Plaza

**6) Investigate, promote, and apply innovative techniques to preserve and protect lands for agricultural purposes.**

Valencia County has an extensive tradition of agricultural activities. Although there were more than 14,000 acres of irrigated land in Valencia County in 2002, farmland has been declining historically as a consequence of land subdivision and urbanizing development. The agricultural sector of the local economy is also diminishing due to rising costs of production for relatively low value crops. In contrast, the value of land is escalating, making it more profitable for a farmer to sell land for housing or commercial development than it is to continue an investment of farmland.



In order to preserve land within the County for viable agricultural enterprise, this recommendation states that the County should research innovative techniques for agricultural land preservation that have been tested in other areas of the country, and even in foreign countries. For example, the County should investigate the feasibility of establishing a local system for the transfer or purchase of development rights in order to compensate farmers who wish to dedicate their property for use as permanent farmland. There are also new zoning techniques that allow for cluster development (i.e., small lot or connected residential units) that incorporates dedicated agricultural land through protective property covenants.



Agricultural land in Tomé

Also, the County should support and promote the establishment and growth of agricultural land trusts. A land trust is a nonprofit organization that works to conserve land by acquiring or managing farmland or conservation easements. They are independent, entrepreneurial organizations that work with landowners who are interested in protecting farmland. Land trusts may work cooperatively with governmental organizations.

**7) Promote and support affordable housing programs in the County, emphasizing site-built housing and rehabilitation of existing homes.**

There were approximately 25,000 housing units in Valencia County counted in the Year 2000 Census; yet more than one-third of those units were mobile homes; and multiple units (apartments) comprised almost nine percent of the total. Seventeen percent of the housing stock is considered to be substandard. The median income levels for households in the County are relatively low but similar to the State as a whole; yet there is still a significant proportion (about 17%) of the population that remains below the poverty level. All of these factors are indicators that there is a substantial need for affordable housing in the County.

Although mobile homes are a legitimate housing choice, they depreciate in value quickly, effect surrounding property values, and tend to be viewed as substandard housing. Therefore, the County should emphasize alternatives to



mobile homes and manufactured housing, particularly as dwelling units for low income residents. The County can use its authority to impose more stringent regulations on the installation and maintenance of manufactured housing and mobile homes in order to ensure quality residential units and stabilize the property values for such housing.

A greater range of housing opportunities need to be available throughout the County. Consequently, the County should promote programs such as housing rehabilitation and mortgage assistance to increase the overall value of the regional housing stock. Also, the County should investigate the role and functions of a County Housing Authority as a means to organize and administer a comprehensive housing program serving the entire County.



Habitat for Humanity Housing

**8) Establish a special committee to prepare a consolidated master plan and development program for public parks, recreational areas, and designated open space.**

The availability of parks, open space lands, and recreational areas is often cited as a major necessity by residents. Although these types of land uses are evident throughout the County, they are developed and maintained by a number of different entities. Parks and recreational facilities are provided to a great extent by the municipal governments and the public school districts. Of particular importance is the fact that the County has abundant open space resources that need to be clearly defined and, if necessary, officially designated for preservation or protection.

It is recommended that the County establish a Parks and Recreation Committee for the purpose of developing and maintaining a regional plan that incorporates the entire system of parks, recreational areas, and open space lands throughout the County, regardless of ownership or operational authority. This Committee would serve as a special advisory body to the Board of County Commissioners and perhaps to other entities that build and maintain parks and recreational facilities. A county-wide master plan for all parks and recreational facilities could identify areas lacking those amenities; and in certain cases, the County may seek to acquire, develop and maintain its own parks or recreational areas to ensure accessibility to all residents of the County.



**9) Maintain a current Comprehensive Plan and a long-range comprehensive land use planning process for the County.**

The existing Comprehensive Plan for Valencia County was adopted in 1986. That plan was essentially a policy guidance document for the Board of County Commissioners, and was comprised of policy statements accompanied by various strategies for carrying out or implementing the respective policies. It contained policies regarding land use, economic development, infrastructure, and public services and facilities. The 1986 Comprehensive Plan is no longer considered applicable and is certainly not current. As stated in the resolution adopting that Plan, and as a general rule, the Comprehensive Plan should be reevaluated and updated at least every five years after adoption.

The Comprehensive Plan for the County installs a framework for current and future policy decisions by elected officials regarding land use activities and development. Importantly, a Comprehensive Plan is a high-level plan that provides for the integration of plans: either by function such as land use, transportation, water resources, and economic development; or by levels of government (sometimes referred to as the consistency principle) ranging from County subareas to municipal, state, federal, and tribal jurisdictions. The Comprehensive Plan is an official document of the County and provides a legal basis for zoning authority.

In order for any Comprehensive Plan to be meaningful and effective as a decision-making guide for public officials, the Plan must be current and reflect the conditions, public values, and expectations of the times. Major changes in development trends or significant regional events often require a reassessment of the County's goals, objectives, and strategies for future development. Finally, a comprehensive plan must be developed through a formal planning process, with public input, adequately funded, and administered by qualified staff and a knowledgeable planning commission.

**10) Adopt intergovernmental resolutions and/or joint powers agreements to establish cooperative programs for regional public services and land use management.**

Even though one-third of the population of Valencia County lives within the municipalities of Belen, Los Lunas, and Bosque Farms, they are nevertheless residents of the County. Although there are legal distinctions between the various governmental jurisdictions, public services and facilities are not always restricted by such boundaries. Other key jurisdictions within the County include the public school districts, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, State-owned lands, and Federal trust lands such as the Isleta and Laguna Indian reservations, Bureau of Land Management, and National Forests.

The multiple jurisdictions in Valencia County should be viewed as an



opportunity for collaboration in providing County-wide services and facilities for County residents. Pooling of resources, benefits through the economies of scale, and joint administration should be pursued by the County whenever feasible to ensure a balanced system of public services and facilities. Intergovernmental resolutions and joint powers agreements are the most common techniques for establishing regionalization or consolidation of programs and services that are areawide in scale. Even agreements with out-of-County jurisdictions should be considered. Valencia County should develop a tribal outreach process for maintaining communication with the Pueblos of Isleta and Laguna.

In regard to land use management, subdivision activities that occur within the three-mile radius of each of the municipalities in the County are subject to a concurrent jurisdiction of the Municipality and the County. A special means of coordination should be formally established between the two governments for purposes of subdivision and development review, municipal annexation, and provision of regional services. The County should also investigate the possibility of establishing municipal extraterritorial zoning which creates separate zoning authorities for the lands that are adjacent to and outside of the municipal boundaries.

### **Transportation Systems Development**

#### **11) Adopt and maintain a long range, multimodal transportation plan for the County.**

A long-range transportation systems plan, which includes all modes of transportation, is a necessity for achieving the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the County. It is important to emphasize the multimodal aspects of long range transportation planning, specifically roads and highways, public transit, bikeways and trails, airports and railroads. It is also crucial that transportation planning be integrated with land use planning as well as other plans of regional scale affecting the County.

Concurrent with the development of this Comprehensive Plan, a County transportation plan has also been in progress. The preparation of the "Valencia County Mobility Plan" is a major undertaking that will result in a long-range, multimodal transportation plan, anticipated for completion by the end of 2005. A mission statement and specific goals and objectives for a County-wide transportation system have been formulated to provide current and future direction for the development of a transportation infrastructure. The Mobility Plan addresses bicycle travel and facilities, pedestrians, equestrians, school bus routes, roadway construction and maintenance, commuter rail, and public transportation such as bus service. County transportation needs are being determined, and a prioritized list of projects will be one of the products of the transportation plan.



**12) Create an organizational structure and planning process to identify and evaluate short-term transportation needs.**

Due to the often limited resources and equipment available for road construction and maintenance, and due to the growing cost of building or operating transportation infrastructure, the County needs to continually evaluate and set priorities for transportation system needs. With approximately 1200 miles of roads under County maintenance, it is advisable that the County apply a systematic approach to planning, programming, designing, and constructing road improvements.



Traffic on NM 263

In order to maintain the most efficient and cost-effective county road network, it is recommended that the County establish a special advisory committee to the Board of County Commissioners with a responsibility to assess road conditions and suggest priorities for short-term road improvements as well as long range transportation system needs. At a minimum, a six-year transportation improvement program should be prepared and submitted by this committee on an annual cycle. Such a committee must have representatives from the County Road Maintenance Department, but should also include other individuals with some knowledge of transportation issues to provide a comprehensive review and evaluation of transportation needs. The pool for membership on this special advisory committee might include representatives from the public school districts, municipalities in the County, the U.S. Forest Service, the Pueblos, public transit providers, bike riding groups, aviation and railroad companies, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

Development of a county roads evaluation system is also recommended. An evaluation system needs to be formalized and standardized for consistency and fairness in determining the priorities for road improvements, especially when there are limited resources available to the County. A road conditions rating system should be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in order to provide a justifiable process for the distribution of resources for road and transportation improvements to all areas of the County. Ratings must be based on roadway conditions data collected and analyzed by the County. The special advisory committee would then have a basis for developing meaningful recommendations for the Board of County Commissioners.



**13) Impose design criteria to minimize transportation facility impacts on land use (particularly in residential areas), natural resources, and environmental quality in the County.**

The County should research the use of innovative road design criteria, as well as regulations and standards, for road projects that result in minimum negative impacts on nearby properties. Also, the effects of roads traversing sensitive areas (in terms of natural resources and ecosystems) should be considered as an element of all road improvement or construction projects. The County should continue to develop and carry out technically-based procedures for conducting impact assessments on transportation system improvements. Some design concepts that might be considered are: traffic calming techniques (e.g., speed bumps and intersection barriers) to reduce vehicle speeds, sound reduction walls along busy highways, and limited access roadways to prohibit access to abutting lands.

**14) Participate in the planning and operations of the Regional Transit District for the County.**

In 2003, the state legislature approved and the governor signed the Regional Transit District Act. This legislation allows two or more governmental entities to enter into a contract to form a regional transit district. Once formed, this district can take on the responsibility of providing a regional transit system. In March 2005, the New Mexico Transportation Commission approved the formation of the Mid-Region Transit District. The initial membership of this district includes: the counties of Sandoval, Bernalillo, and Valencia; and the municipalities of Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Belen, Bernalillo, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, Los Lunas, and Bosque Farms.

The initial organizational phase of this regional transit district should be completed by the fall of 2005. Then, the service and financial planning effort will commence. The purpose of this effort is to develop a set of operating and financing recommendations for public review. The conclusion of this process will be approval of a service plan and financial plan for the district by all of the parties involved. The development of these plans provides an opportunity for residents of Valencia County to become involved in the further development of the public transportation system within the county. Because the operating and maintenance expenses for this system will be paid for by residents, as will a percentage of the capital expenses, it is very important that a financially viable system be developed.

**15) Establish a County-wide master plan for bikeways and trails, accommodating pedestrians and equestrians.**

Although the need for a master plan for bikeways and trails was identified early in the planning process, a relatively detailed plan for bikeways and trails will



be included in the County Mobility Plan. As an integral part of the transportation system in Valencia County, a bicycle/pedestrian network is being defined and the most recent draft map showing existing and proposed bikeways is included in this Comprehensive Plan (refer to Figure 17). Both on-road bike routes and off-road bike trails are identified. There is also a proposal for a special network of equestrian trails being developed for inclusion in the County Mobility Plan. A major component of this master plan should be an identification of special and dedicated funding sources for building and maintaining the network of bikeways and trails.

### **Regional Infrastructure Development**

#### **16) Maintain an inventory of regional infrastructure systems and dedicated corridors for reference in County planning activities.**

Transportation routes and utility lines cross the County in several major corridors. A general overview of such corridors is presented in Figure 7 of this Plan. In addition to the electricity and gas transmission lines, there is also an array of telecommunication towers scattered across the County. For purposes of planning and land use management, the County should maintain a complete and comprehensive inventory of these special structures and should establish formal connections to the major utility companies regarding their rights-of-way through the County. The County should look into the feasibility of imposing franchise fees on public utilities where appropriate.

A detailed inventory of regional infrastructure is beneficial to the County as areas grow and develop. Accessibility to infrastructure is essential to the future patterns of growth, particularly in terms of supporting the concept of activity centers, clustered development, and major traffic generators. With an up-to-date inventory, the County can determine if development proposals are located in appropriate areas that can accommodate the increased levels of development.

#### **17) Support the development of regional facilities and services that address health and safety needs of County residents.**

This recommendation pertains to the regional economies of scale when providing or ensuring public services relating to health and safety. Because of the large area under County jurisdiction, it is more efficient for the County to support or develop multiple-use facilities for services such as fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency rescue. County-wide systems are also logical for other essential community services such as regional solid waste management, hazardous waste management, and medical and health care facilities.



**18) Establish special purpose districts in the County to enable centralized infrastructure, consolidation of services, and clustering of development.**

The New Mexico Statutes authorize the creation of special purpose or improvement districts to provide various services and facilities for general public use. The advantage of such a district is the creation of a special governmental structure that has limited but focused responsibility to provide services, build facilities, and in many cases have taxing and bonding authority. Special districts are particularly effective in unincorporated subareas of the County where suburban or urbanizing development is taking place and there is adequate density to justify centralized infrastructure and services.

This recommendation suggests that the County investigate various types of special purpose districts and pursue establishment of such districts in appropriate areas of the County. The New Mexico State Statutes present a number of opportunities for creating special districts. The first action that might be initiated by the County in collaboration with the municipalities is set forth in the Special District Procedures Act [4-53-1 to 4-53-11 NMSA 1978] which allows for a county special district commission to be set up to create special districts in the County. Other relevant statutes include the County Improvement District Act [4-55A-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.], the Community Service District Act [4-54-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.], the Water and Sanitation District Act [73-21-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.], the Refuse Disposal Act [4-52-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.], the Special Hospital District Act [4-48A-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.], and the Public Improvement District Act [5-11-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.].

**Natural Resource Protection**

**19) Establish water conservation guidelines for water systems in the unincorporated areas of the County.**

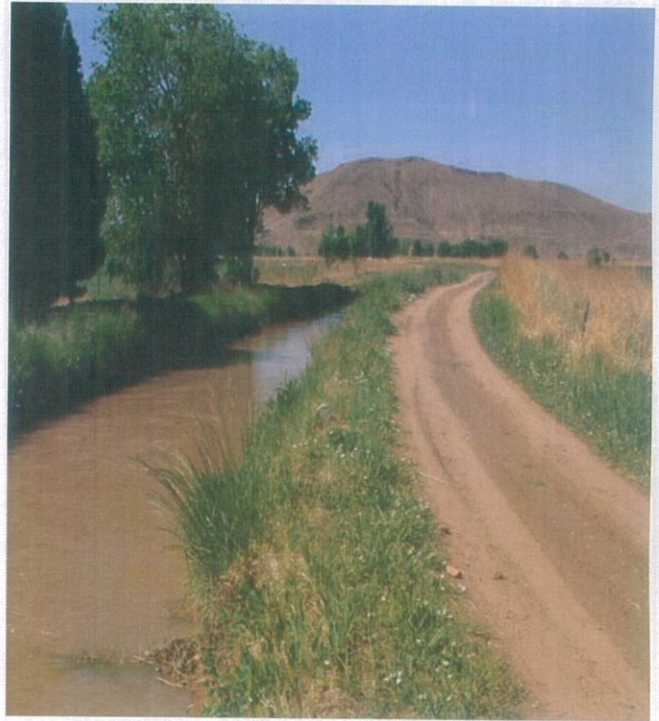
The availability of water in Valencia County is an ongoing subject of concern. The most effective means for ensuring water supplies for the future is to conserve existing water resources. Water resource management should focus on increasing the efficiency of water use rather than increasing water supply. All public water providers should adopt water conservation plans with a primary goal of reducing per capita consumption. Industrial water users should minimize wasted water and reuse or recycle their process waters. Agricultural water users can reduce water loss through conveyance channels, laser-leveling fields, and switching to lower water consumptive crops. It is recommended that the County identify long term water conservation guidelines applicable to the water users in the unincorporated areas of the County. It is further recommended that the County adopt water conservation goals and develop a process to measure the impact of water savings.

If there are sufficient data on the hydrologic circulation of water throughout



the County, there may be some value in developing a "water budget" that calculates the water coming into the County, the amount of water lost and gained within the County, and the amount of water leaving the County. The County could assist in the gathering of water data and information, and might help develop methods and measuring procedures for the use of water within the County. The important point is that the County should support any studies to determine the extent of the County's water resources and maintain up-to-date projections of future water demand. Without data and information about water use in the County, it would be difficult to monitor changes in water consumption, and to prove water conservation success.

Although not currently a public water provider (i.e., centralized water systems), nor a water quality regulator, Valencia County should take a more active role in water management affecting the water resources available within the boundaries of the County. Some of the water program strategies the County can initiate immediately are setting standards for drought-tolerant landscaping, developing water monitoring procedures, educating the public about the necessity of water conservation, promoting the use of water-saving devices, and preventing water waste. Other water conservation strategies are identified in the Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan published by the Mid-Region Council of Governments which includes all of Valencia County in the regional planning area.



Conservancy Ditch in Tomé

## **20) Participate in watershed management programs for the County in conjunction with state and federal agencies.**

Virtually all of Valencia County lies within the Rio Grande basin which is comprised of numerous watersheds formed by the tributaries to the Rio Grande. Maintaining healthy watersheds leads to a number of benefits that help to increase the overall water supply in the County. Some of the basic principles of watershed management are: to reduce soil erosion and its effect on water quality; to increase infiltration of precipitation and surface water in order to recharge groundwater; and to lower evapotranspiration rates through vegetation



management. The County can rely on its zoning authority, for example, to adopt steep slope regulations in order to minimize soil erosion caused by development in hilly areas of the County. Another technique of watershed management is rainwater harvesting which utilizes retention structures to capture and utilize storm water flows.

Watershed management has such regional significance, that there are numerous federal and state agencies carrying out programs and projects to improve the functions of watersheds. It is recommended that Valencia County work directly with these agencies in combined efforts to improve the health of local watersheds. For example, the County should collaborate with the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District and the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service on specific watershed management projects. Also, the County should work in collaboration with the N.M. Environment Department to identify and mitigate "non-point source" pollution carried by storm water runoff in the County and affecting the water quality of the Rio Grande. And the County should work in collaboration with the N.M. Environment Department and the N.M. Office of the State Engineer to identify and protect groundwater recharge areas in the County.

**21) Establish a Rio Grande Bosque Protection Overlay Zone to manage development bordering the Bosque.**

The Rio Grande bisects the County from north to south, sustaining an often dense woodland or "Bosque" of cottonwoods, elm, willow, salt cedar, and Russian olive trees. The river is confined to a narrow floodplain constrained by a levee system built to control over bank flooding. Consequently, the Bosque is a highly valued natural feature of the County and should be protected and managed to ensure a healthy ecosystem and permanent natural asset to the County. In contrast to the obvious benefit as open space, the Bosque is also a highly sensitive area that is prone to wildfire, invasion and overgrowth of non-native plant species (some of which are heavy water consumers), and environmental contamination from urban generated sources (including waste disposal).



Bosque vegetation along the Rio Grande



This recommendation calls for action by the County, preferably in collaboration with the municipalities along the river, to designate an overlay zone for the purpose of protecting and preserving the Rio Grande Bosque. By using its zoning authority, the County can control the effects of urbanizing development near the Bosque by creating a Bosque Protection Overlay Zone. In addition to imposing special regulations on lands along the Bosque, the County should support the ongoing Bosque restoration and fire management programs to reduce plant density and eliminate non-native vegetation.

**22) Develop and implement a ground water protection plan and program for the County.**

In Valencia County, river water is primarily dedicated for farming and wildlife, while pumped groundwater is processed for drinking and other domestic and industrial uses. Therefore, the availability of quality groundwater is critical for use by County residents. Protection of the groundwater is a very high priority of the County. Thus, it is recommended that the County take a lead in the development and implementation of a ground water protection plan.

In general terms, a ground water protection plan requires a two-step evaluation process. First, all of the potential sources of water pollution should be identified and monitored within the County. Then, those areas vulnerable to contamination need to be identified and delineated through technical analysis. Whenever there is an overlap of potential pollution sources and vulnerable areas, it can be assumed that a pollution problem area exists. To some extent the County, through its fire districts, is already monitoring the storage and handling of hazardous and toxic materials within the County. After pollution problem areas are delineated, a groundwater protection plan would necessarily include an implementation strategy with proposed regulations on land use activities in vulnerable areas, and the monitoring of hazardous and toxic materials.

One of the strategies for ground water protection is the adoption and enforcement of wellhead protection zones around public water wells. Wellhead protection zones are typically set up as an overlay zone in the zoning ordinance. The State of New Mexico has a wellhead protection program that recommends a radius of 1,000 feet measured from the wellhead to be designated as the wellhead protection area. It is left up to the local governments to use their regulatory authority to control land use within these wellhead protection areas, to the extent that some uses may be prohibited due to the possibility of pollution spills and groundwater contamination.

**23) Develop and adopt new regulatory techniques to protect environmentally sensitive areas within the County.**

This recommendation requires that the County work in conjunction with the N.M. Environment Department to identify environmental issues in Valencia



County relating to established state and federal guidelines and rules for environmental quality. The County should be informed about air quality standards and enforcement programs, impacts of the federal Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act in combination with various state water quality regulations, and local implications of the Endangered Species Act. Often, state and federal laws regarding the environment are location specific and identify sensitive areas as a result. The County should recognize such environmentally sensitive areas and use its regulatory authority in coordination with state and federal law enforcement to protect those sensitive areas.

The County, to some extent, already imposes regulations that are intended to protect the environment, through its land development ordinances such as zoning and subdivision regulations. Therefore, it is further recommended that the County conduct an intensive review of its regulatory ordinances in terms of their impact on the natural environment, and ensure protection of designated environmentally sensitive areas in the County.

**24) Investigate air quality in the County and implement an air quality protection plan, if or when necessary.**

The Air Quality Bureau (AQB) of the New Mexico Environment Department is the regulatory authority for air quality control in Valencia County. The mission of the AQB is to protect the State's residents and natural beauty by preventing the deterioration of the air quality. The AQB is a regulatory authority that enforces the State's air quality regulations and issues permits for construction and operation of facilities that produce emissions into the air.

It is recommended that the County work in conjunction with the AQB to determine if there are any specific air quality problems in the County and where there might be violations of state or federal air quality standards. If there is anything within the authority of the County to support or assist the AQB in regard to protecting the local air quality, the County should develop an air quality plan in coordination with the State program. Some local programs that might be considered are vehicle emission monitoring and permitting, open burning restrictions (including wood burning fireplaces), and fugitive dust control.

**Economic Development Strategies**

**25) Impose special development criteria for "County Activity Centers" intended for large scale, master planned, industrial and heavy commercial development for designated locations in the County.**

The concept of County Activity Centers refers to forms of development that are characterized by a focused intensity of land use activities; which may be dispersed throughout the County in a number of locations where adequate infrastructure is available. County Activity Centers should be regulated to



encourage a concentrated and diverse mixture of land uses and “walkable” communities. However, due to the overall magnitude or scale of development, unique scheduling of operations, or the unprecedented nature of County Activity Centers, there may be a questionable impact on surrounding lands. Therefore, this recommendation is intended to encourage the use of innovative regulations to ensure the compatibility of County Activity Centers with adjoining or nearby development that is not associated with the Center.

Special zoning districts can be utilized for identifying and advancing the development of County Activity Centers. Regulations can be applied to fit the general purpose and character of the Activity Center, and to provide any necessary buffering or controls to minimize negative impacts on site as well as onto the surrounding lands. In some areas, new development control techniques such as form-based zoning might be applicable. Form-based zoning generally pertains to the visual and physical character of development. Another common technique is to impose performance zoning standards which regulate the off-site impacts of the development or land use activity.

**26) Encourage new business and support the growth of existing local business establishments through regulatory relief and tax incentives.**

With some exceptions, county governments in New Mexico do not have significant revenue generating capabilities, partly due to widely-dispersed populations, lack of urban-type infrastructure, and limited commercial and business activities in unincorporated areas. Gross receipts taxes are the predominant source of revenues for local governments in New Mexico, and the majority of the gross receipts tax generating businesses are located within the corporate limits of the municipalities. The County benefits directly from the sales revenues of commercial, retail, and other business establishments in the unincorporated areas of the County. Therefore, it is recommended that the County investigate and implement growth incentives for new and established commercial and industrial development in the County.



The Sears store in Los Chavez



In order to encourage new business development in those areas that provide the greatest benefit to the County, there should be a thorough review followed by appropriate revisions to the County Zoning Ordinance regarding the development standards for commercial zones. Various forms of regulatory relief can be effective in attracting commercial establishments into areas where the development costs can be minimized. For instance, the County can allow more flexibility for design and/or reconstruction of commercial establishments by relaxing site development standards such as building height, setback, floor area ratios, parking, and other such requirements.

The County should also research tax incentive programs authorized by State Statutes. Of particular interest to the County is the New Mexico Enterprise Zone Act [5-9-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.] which provides for the establishment of Enterprise Zones in the County to stimulate new jobs and promote revitalization of economically distressed areas. The creation of special districts is another development incentive discussed elsewhere in these recommendations.

**27) Initiate an association or partnerships with the economic development organizations in the County.**

This recommendation promotes coordination and collaboration among the many types of development organizations in the County. By initiating or facilitating an association of governmental economic development departments and agencies, local chambers of commerce, business associations, and private sector economic development organizations, the County could enable a powerful and unified organizational arrangement focused on building the economic base of the County as a whole.

The County should take the lead in building effective coalitions of economic development groups and individuals who can recruit outside interests in bringing jobs into the County. Since the entire county benefits from the growth in employment, common or unified development strategies place the County in a stronger position to be competitive with the "outside world."

**28) Work with educational institutions to promote adult education and job training programs for County residents.**

The labor force in the County is a critical component of the local economy. The availability of skilled and educated workers is essential for business and industrial start-ups, and potential employers will review the socioeconomic characteristics of the County as part of their criteria for locating new sites for building facilities. Because the overall education level of Valencia County residents is generally lower than the State and surrounding counties (refer to Table 7 for 2000 Census data), there should be a concerted effort to provide educational opportunities, particularly to the adult population, in order to raise the



educational attainment as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the County's work force.

It is recommended that the County work in conjunction with the public school districts, the University of New Mexico, the Small Business Development Center, and other educational institutions to promote adult education programs, drop-out prevention, and job training opportunities for County residents. To set an example, the County can take a direct role in job training through a program for internships in County government. Also, the County should investigate the potential for extending the district boundaries for the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Technical-Vocation Institute to include all or portions of Valencia County.

**29) Support and provide incentives for a sustainable agricultural economy for home grown and locally marketed products.**

Given the extensive history and current levels of agricultural activities in Valencia County, it is recommended that the County support the local agricultural economy and promote the benefits of locally-grown products. A significant market for agricultural products exists in the County residents themselves; and, with an effective local marketing process, the County stands to capitalize on a more self sufficient agricultural economy. Although export marketing is still considered to be a standard goal for agriculture, the preponderance of small-scale farms evident throughout the County may be more suitable for marketing produce in the Middle Rio Grande valley (i.e., Albuquerque metropolitan area). Since there are few "growers or farmers markets" in the County, it would be relatively easy to organize and promote such markets; and perhaps establish dedicated or permanent locations for the markets to evolve into a more significant business activity in the County.

In order to protect and preserve the agricultural lands in the County, the zoning ordinance should be reviewed for regulations and restrictions affecting agricultural land use and agriculture-related activities. Zoning incentives can be explored to compensate farmers for the typically low values of agricultural land. As mentioned in other recommendations herein, there are several agricultural land preservation techniques that are feasible in the County, such as the transfer or purchase of development rights, agricultural land trusts, and innovative cluster zoning for combined residential/agricultural developments.



## **PART VI**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

The success and effectiveness of this Comprehensive Plan is dependent on the County's ability to implement the Action Plan Recommendations that are presented in Part V. Those 29 Recommendations can be achieved only to the extent that the County has adequate resources and there is a demonstrated need to carry out particular recommended actions. Realistically, the County may already be involved in a recommended action to some extent through the current level of operations or under an existing special program or project. Nevertheless, the decision to implement the recommended actions in this Comprehensive Plan ultimately falls on the Board of County Commissioners performing as the governing body of the County.

#### **Determining Priorities**

When the Action Plan Recommendations were being finalized, an attempt was made through the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the public workshops to suggest priorities for the Recommendations. Survey forms were distributed, asking for the recipients to identify priorities (i.e., low, medium, or high) for implementing each of the 29 Recommendations. The result of the informal survey was that nearly all of the Action Recommendations were considered to be high priority. Because the survey was asking for a personal opinion, it was not deemed to be helpful in advising the County on setting priorities for the Action Plan.

Priorities for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan must be relative to factors such as overall costs, staffing capability, County organizational structure, ease of implementation, time scheduling, and current or future policies established by the governing body. In order to provide some guidance to the County on the selection of Action Plan Recommendations, an analysis of the various actions included within the recommendation statements was conducted to reorganize and generalize the recommendations in a more simplified form. Thus, a content screening approach was used to condense the recommendations and to present options in a summary discussion.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

Since it would not be realistic to expect the County to implement all of the Action Plan Recommendations immediately, the following synopsis of the recommended actions is provided for policy consideration by the Board of County Commissioners. This is a generalized overview of Recommendations and, as such, lacks the detail of the full recommendation statements. However, these implementation strategies seek to clarify the range of options for the Board of



County Commissioners when developing programs, projects, and County budgets in the future. The overview and summary of recommendations and actions is provided as follows:

- a) All of the County's land use ordinances need to be subject to ongoing review and revision as necessary to incorporate new techniques and concepts in land use management. This is a critical activity to influence the location and intensity of future development and for implementing the concepts of County Activity Centers and directing new growth into appropriate areas. Key players in this activity will be the County Planning and Zoning Commission and the County Planning staff. Furthermore the County should regulate land development in sensitive areas where threats to public health and safety or damage to the environment or ecosystems may result.
- b) Future planning in the County should be conducted for two distinct levels of development: 1) regional systems, and 2) local communities and activity centers. The County is a conglomerate of diverse communities which need to retain their identities, yet also need to work cooperatively and in coordination to achieve overall County goals. The County should maintain an active role in the following regional systems:
  - 1. Fire protection;
  - 2. Law enforcement;
  - 3. Emergency response;
  - 4. Water resource management;
  - 5. Solid waste management;
  - 6. Hazardous waste management; and
  - 7. Medical and health care facilities.
- c) This County Comprehensive Plan is a framework plan which provides a basis for more detailed functional plans. The recommendations identify a need for several functional plans:
  - 1. Master plan for parks, recreational areas, and open space;
  - 2. Long-range, multimodal transportation systems plan;
  - 3. Master plan for bikeways and trails (including equestrian); and
  - 4. Groundwater protection plan.
- d) A number of special programs are recommended in this Plan, which may require changes to County staffing or organizational structure. In some cases, such programs already exist but should be improved and reviewed to avoid contradictions with the Comprehensive Plan. The special programs include the following:
  - 1. Comprehensive housing program;
  - 2. Tribal outreach process with Isleta and Laguna Pueblos;
  - 3. County roads evaluation system;
  - 4. Tax incentive programs;
  - 5. Establishment of special districts;
  - 6. Agricultural lands preservation; and
  - 7. Water resource protection and conservation.
- e) Creation of special committees is recommended in this Plan. These



committees may be temporary or “ad hoc” committees, or may be permanent or standing committees:

1. Parks and recreation committee;
  2. Transportation advisory committee; and
  3. Association of economic development organizations.
- f) The County can enhance its authority and leverage its resources by partnering with other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. Joint powers agreements, intergovernmental resolutions, and memorandums of agreement can be used to establish collaboration structures. Potential collaboration should be considered for the following purposes:
1. Agreements for land use management in municipal planning and platting jurisdictions or extraterritorial zoning jurisdictions;
  2. Intergovernmental resolutions for regional public services;
  3. Participation on the Mid-Region Transit District;
  4. Implementation of the Regional Water Plan for the Middle Rio Grande;
  5. Watershed management;
  6. Rio Grande Bosque Protection Overlay Zone;
  7. Air quality management; and
  8. Economic development organizations.
- g) Some new tools that the County should add to the comprehensive planning process include up-to-date mapping and inventories of the following:
1. Inventory and map of historic places and cultural elements;
  2. Inventory of regional infrastructure systems and dedicated corridors; and
  3. Water resource inventories and mapping.



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**APPENDIX A**

**DESIGNATED VALENCIA COUNTY COMMUNITIES STATISTICS**



## County Community Statistics

### 2000 Population by Age

	Median Age	Under 15	Under 15 %	65 and over	65 and over %	Total Population
State of New Mexico	34.6	419,108	23.0%	212,225	11.7%	1,819,046
Valencia County	33.8	16,594	25.1%	6,723	10.2%	66,152
Belen City	34.6	1,660	24.1%	1,044	15.1%	6,901
Bosque Farms Village	40.7	808	20.6%	509	12.9%	3,931
Casa Colorada CDP	42.0	7	12.5%	7	12.5%	56
El Cerro/Monterey Park CDP	24.2	1,937	35.3%	174	3.2%	5,483
Jarales CDP	35.3	360	25.1%	140	9.8%	1,434
Los Chaves CDP	34.9	1,222	24.3%	433	8.6%	5,033
Los Lunas Village	31.8	2,597	25.9%	891	8.9%	10,034
Los Trujillos/Gabaldon CDP	37.4	465	21.5%	277	12.8%	2,166
Meadow Lake CDP	27.2	1,464	32.6%	196	4.4%	4,491
Peralta CDP	36.4	893	23.8%	411	11.0%	3,750
Rio Communities CDP	44.5	813	19.3%	1,079	25.6%	4,213
Rio Communities North CDP	31.3	441	27.8%	107	6.7%	1,588
Tome/Adelino CDP	36.0	497	22.5%	209	9.5%	2,211
Valencia CDP	36.8	1,025	22.8%	453	10.1%	4,500

### 2000 Minority Population by Community

	Total Pop	White Not Hispanic	Minority Total	Minority %
State of New Mexico	1,819,046	813,495	1,005,551	55.3%
Valencia County	66,152	26,087	40,065	60.6%
Belen City	6,901	1,920	4,981	72.2%
Bosque Farms Village	3,931	2,616	1,315	33.5%
Casa Colorada CDP	56	12	44	78.6%
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	5,483	1,258	4,225	77.1%
Jarales CDP	1,434	477	957	66.7%
Los Chaves CDP	5,033	2,137	2,896	57.5%
Los Lunas Village	10,034	3,715	6,319	63.0%
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	2,166	743	1,423	65.7%
Meadow Lake CDP	4,491	1,596	2,895	64.5%
Peralta CDP	3,750	1,649	2,101	56.0%
Rio Communities CDP	4,213	2,416	1,797	42.7%
Rio Communities North CDP	1,588	798	790	49.7%
Tome-Adelino CDP	2,211	753	1,458	65.9%
Valencia CDP	4,500	2,067	2,433	54.1%



### 2000 Average Household Size

	Average Household Size
State of New Mexico	2.63
Valencia County	2.86
Belen City	2.61
Bosque Farms Village	2.76
Casa Colorada CDP	2.80
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	3.71
Jarales CDP	2.84
Los Chaves CDP	2.85
Los Lunas Village	2.75
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	2.69
Meadow Lake CDP	3.35
Peralta CDP	2.85
Rio Communities CDP	2.39
Rio Communities North CDP	2.89
Tome-Adelino CDP	2.83
Valencia CDP	2.87

### 1999 Median Household Income

	Median Household Income
State of New Mexico	\$34,133
Valencia County	\$34,099
Belen City	\$26,754
Bosque Farms Village	\$44,055
Casa Colorada CDP	\$16,750
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	\$25,761
Jarales CDP	\$26,897
Los Chaves CDP	\$38,228
Los Lunas Village	\$36,240
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	\$28,989
Meadow Lake CDP	\$25,561
Peralta CDP	\$38,039
Rio Communities CDP	\$33,125
Rio Communities North CDP	\$46,773
Tome-Adelino CDP	\$27,361
Valencia CDP	\$40,521



### 1999 Below Poverty Status

	Percentage Below Poverty Status
State of New Mexico	18.4
Valencia County	16.8
Belen City	24.8
Bosque Farms Village	7.7
Casa Colorada CDP	41.2
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	34.6
Jarales CDP	13.9
Los Chaves CDP	15.8
Los Lunas Village	13.5
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	15.4
Meadow Lake CDP	24.4
Peralta CDP	11.5
Rio Communities CDP	7.4
Rio Communities North CDP	3.9
Tome-Adelino CDP	18.6
Valencia CDP	12.0

### 2000 Housing Units and Median Year Structure Built

	Housing Units	Median Year Structure Built
Valencia County	24,643	1983
Belen City	2,845	1972
Bosque Farms Village	1,470	1978
Casa Colorada CDP	19	1973
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	1,623	1988
Jarales CDP	542	1976
Los Chaves CDP	1,895	1984
Los Lunas Village	3,740	1988
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	966	1975
Meadow Lake CDP	1,540	1987
Peralta CDP	1,407	1981
Rio Communities CDP	1,905	1983
Rio Communities North CDP	618	1996
Tome-Adelino CDP	790	1982
Valencia CDP	1,663	1979



### 2000 Housing Type (Total)

	Single Family	Multifamily	Mobile Homes
Valencia County	14,040	2,087	8,516
Belen City	1,828	431	538
Bosque Farms Village	1,076	0	394
Casa Colorada CDP	19	0	0
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	333	0	1,284
Jarales CDP	357	0	177
Los Chaves CDP	1,119	9	760
Los Lunas Village	2,670	467	597
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	590	47	345
Meadow Lake CDP	193	0	1,347
Peralta CDP	790	40	577
Rio Communities CDP	1,631	104	170
Rio Communities North CDP	583	0	35
Tome-Adelino CDP	493	0	297
Valencia CDP	1,113	26	524

### 2000 Housing Type (Percentage)

	Single Family	Multifamily	Mobile Homes
Valencia County	57.0	8.5	34.5
Belen City	64.3	15.1	18.9
Bosque Farms Village	73.2	0	26.8
Casa Colorada CDP	100.0	0	0
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	20.5	0	79.1
Jarales CDP	65.9	0	32.7
Los Chaves CDP	59.1	0.5	40.1
Los Lunas Village	71.4	12.5	16.0
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	61.1	4.9	35.7
Meadow Lake CDP	12.5	0	87.5
Peralta CDP	56.1	2.8	41.0
Rio Communities CDP	85.6	5.5	8.9
Rio Communities North CDP	94.3	0	5.7
Tome-Adelino CDP	62.4	0	37.6
Valencia CDP	66.9	1.6	31.5



### Travel Time to Work

	Less than 30 minutes	More than 30 minutes	Mean Travel Time (minutes)
Valencia County	46.7	53.3	
Belen City	68.4	31.6	22.0
Bosque Farms Village	42.3	53.7	31.7
Casa Colorada CDP		100.0	
El Cerro-Monterey Park CDP	28.1	71.9	39.7
Jarales CDP	56.0	44.0	
Los Chaves CDP	44.6	55.4	30.5
Los Lunas Village	55.9	44.1	26.1
Los Trujillos-Gabaldon CDP	67.6	32.4	
Meadow Lake CDP	15.3	84.7	44.0
Peralta CDP	45.4	54.6	
Rio Communities CDP	61.0	39.0	
Rio Communities North CDP	33.3	66.7	
Tome-Adelino CDP	44.7	55.3	
Valencia CDP	34.7	65.3	33



## **APPENDIX B**

### **RESOLUTION 2005-14: ADOPTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**



VALENCIA COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION 2005 - 14

A RESOLUTION  
ADOPTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE VALENCIA COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**WHEREAS**, Valencia County has received funding through a Community Development Block Grant administered by the state Local Government Division, DFA for the purpose of developing a county-wide Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Valencia County has entered into a Planning Services Agreement with the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) to establish an organizational structure and carry out a process for the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee has been working with the staff of the MRCOG in the development of the Comprehensive Plan since September 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has engaged in various activities to notify the public and solicit community input through the local news media (newspaper and radio), two public workshops, and a public hearing of the Valencia County Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the staff of the MRCOG have reviewed previous and other relevant plans for the County and have incorporated public input into the development of Goals and Objectives for the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, proposed Goals and Objectives for the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan have been formulated to define the County's vision and suggest a means to achieve that vision, to serve as a guide for decisions on issues regarding the future development of the County, and to provide a rational basis for strategic planning recommendations.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the governing body of Valencia County that the Goals and Objectives for the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan are hereby attached and made a part of this Resolution be used as a key element of the comprehensive planning effort.

**PASSED, ADOPTED, and APPROVED** this 21st day of January, 2005.

  
Mary V. Andersen, Chair

  
Georgia Otero-Kirkham, Vice-Chair

  
Paul Edward Trujillo, Commissioner

  
Ron Gentry, Commissioner

  
Lynette Stubblefield, Commissioner

Attest:  
  
Tina Gallegos, County Clerk



## **APPENDIX C**

### **RESOLUTION 2005-48: ADOPTING RECOMMENDATIONS**



**VALENCIA COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Resolution 2005 - 48**

**A RESOLUTION  
RELATING TO PLANNING; ADOPTING RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR ACTION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE COUNTY.**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners has undertaken a process to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the County, funded in part by a federal Community Development Block Grant administered by the New Mexico Local Government Division, DFA, and prepared by the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) under a Planning Services Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, has been working with the staff of the MRCOG and has provided essential guidance in the development of the Comprehensive Plan document; and

**WHEREAS**, Goals and Objectives for the Comprehensive Plan were adopted on January 21, 2005, by the Board of County Commissioners to establish a basis for policy decisions regarding the future development of the County; and

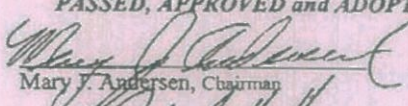
**WHEREAS**, the adopted Goals and Objectives created a foundation for the preparation of various planning strategies entitled Recommendations for Action, which express the key issues and directives of the Comprehensive Plan for the County; and

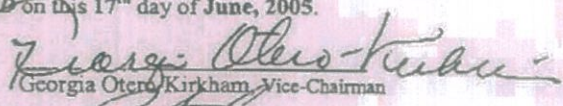
**WHEREAS**, proposed Recommendations for Action were presented for public input at two advertised public workshops conducted on May 17 and May 18, 2005, and have been endorsed by the Comprehensive Plan Steering committee; and

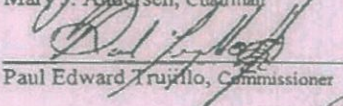
**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations for Action constitute the most important component of the Plan document, and provide a legal basis and framework for Plan implementation.

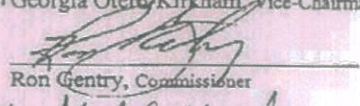
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the governing body of Valencia County does hereby adopt the Recommendations for Action for the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan, attached and made a part of this Resolution.

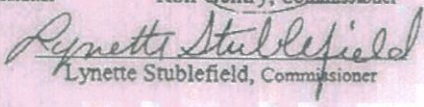
**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED** on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2005.

  
Mary J. Andersen, Chairman

  
Georgia Otero Kirkham, Vice-Chairman

  
Paul Edward Trujillo, Commissioner

  
Ron Gentry, Commissioner

  
Lynette Stublefield, Commissioner

ATTEST:

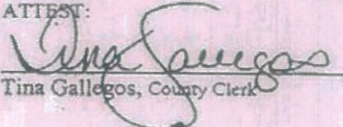
  
Tina Gallegos, County Clerk

EXHIBIT E

BOOK 55

PAGE 705



## **APPENDIX D**

### **RESOLUTION 2005-66: ACCEPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND APPROVING THE PLAN FOR DISTRIBUTION**



**VALENCIA COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION 2005-166**

**A RESOLUTION  
ACCEPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF VALENCIA COUNTY;  
AND APPROVING THE PLAN FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Valencia County has been completed following an extensive planning process overseen by the appointed Valencia County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and prepared by the staff of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) under a Planning Services Agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, Goals and Objectives for the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan were adopted on January 21, 2005, by the Board of County Commissioners to establish a basis for policy decisions regarding the future development of the County; and

**WHEREAS**, "Recommendations for Action" for the Valencia County Comprehensive Plan were adopted on June 17, 2005, by the Board of County Commissioners to identify the key issues, proposed strategies, and potential policy directives for the County; and

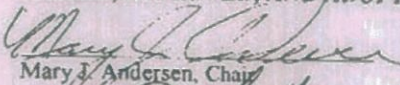
**WHEREAS**, a public information and citizen input process was carried out to ensure general public acceptance of the Comprehensive Plan for the County; and

**WHEREAS**, all of the required components of the Comprehensive Plan have been assembled and reviewed for completeness and factual information in a comprehensive document accessible to the citizens of Valencia County; and

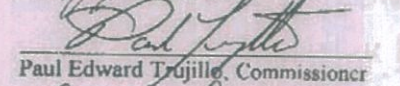
**WHEREAS**, the Valencia County Comprehensive Land Use Plan will provide a basis for establishing policy and implementation strategies for future development in the County, for providing a framework for the integration of special purpose plans and programs for the County, and for promoting a consistency with other plans at local, regional, state, and federal levels.

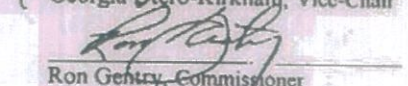
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of County Commissioners does hereby accept the Valencia County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, attached and made a part of this Resolution, and approves such Plan for general public distribution.

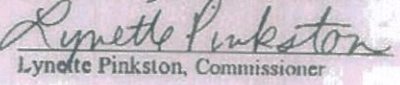
**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2005.

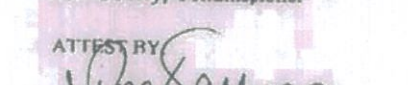
  
Mary J. Andersen, Chair

  
Georgia Otero-Kirkham, Vice-Chair

  
Paul Edward Trujillo, Commissioner

  
Ron Gentry, Commissioner

  
Lynette Pinkston, Commissioner

ATTEST BY  
  
Tina Gallegos, County Clerk